

In the News

Ampex Audio-Video Systems Article Reprint

TV Technology

Buyers Guide

WCAU Hails the Ampex Zeus

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WCAU TV

Philadelphia PA ... The Ampex VPR-3 VTR with the Zeus advanced video processor/TBC is a reliable, accurate machine for use in a broadcast production/post-production environment.

At WCAU, a CBS O&O, we have eight 1" VTRs, all VPR-3s. Five were acquired in 1984, and three were delivered early in 1986.

The station uses seven 1" VTRs for general recordings and playback operations, such as syndicated and local programming, commercial spot reels and screening of all out of house commercial and program material.

The eighth VPR-3 is dedicated to promotion and program post-production.

Sizing up the Ampex

In VTRs, WCAU traditionally has been an Ampex house. However, when the station contemplated a change from 2" Ampex VR-2000s to 1" machines, we viewed all manufacturers equally. After a thorough examination of the available units, we selected the VPR-3 as the workhorse 1" VTR.

The machine has several features which we find significant, especially when equipped with the Zeus. Because we are doing more time compression usually 30 seconds per every 30 minutes

of programming), the Zeus's ability to deliver pictures without field hopping or blurring is important in maintaining picture quality.

Prior to Zeus, using a standard TBC, there was considerable field jitter. The Zeus eliminated it by line-by-line interpolation which removes inter-field verti-

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cal motion during slow motion sequences and improves vertical resolution in a freeze field mode.

Time modification

One facet of time compression that is receiving more attention is the insertion of a late recorded interview into a fixed window of a program that has been previously recorded.

Rather than cut an important question from the interview or re-edit the entire program, the interview segment time can be modified to fit exactly within time constraints by using the time modification capabilities of the VPR-3/Zeus, and audio pitch correction. The content of the interview is not affected.

We have not yet received the VPR-3 "M GEN" software upgrade, which Ampex says will virtually eliminate accumulated set-up errors. We look forward to using

it to reduce multiple generation video distortions of our in-plant product.

In a station like ours, reducing accumulated velocity and setup errors are important to in-house production of commercials and station promos, which can easily go six to eight generations as graphics and digital effects are incorporated.

For those applications where 1" machines are used throughout, the new Zeus software keeps the velocity and other color errors to a minimum.

Low maintenance

Other impressive VPR-3 features are its tape handling system (especially the air bearings), its fast shuttle speed, and search-to-cue capabilities.

The VPR-3 is a very reliable machine. We perform all maintenance ourselves; our videotape operators and maintenance technicians were all sent to Ampex maintenance schools.

While we have nearly doubled the number of VTRs we service, we maintain them within the same amount of time and with the same size staff.

Also on the subject of reliability, we were pleased that our newest VPR-3s worked right out of the box. That kind of quality is what Japanese companies are known for, and it is good to have an American company meeting that standard.

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